

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

DIA WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN, GERMANY

AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

US DOCOSOUTH

SHAPEUSNR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 15668

US DOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: NEW SOCIALIST RELATIONSHIP WITH DC TO TAKE TIME

1. SUMMARY. ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSI) ORIENTATIONS ARE BECOMING CLEARER AS THE SEASON OF POLITICAL SEMINARS AND MEETINGS PREPARES TO GIVE WAY TO THE OPENING OF FORMAL PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY. PARTY SECRETARY BETTINO CRAXI HAS A MANDATE FROM THE GROUP OF 40-YEAR OLDS WHICH SURROUNDS HIM TO REJUVENATE THE PARTY, RAISE ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND ESTABLISH DISTINCT PSI POSITIONS ON CERTAIN ISSUES. HE IS NOT PRESENTLY IN A POSITION, HOWEVER, TO MOVE THE PSI INTO ANY NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH
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THE DC WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE THE COMMUNISTS. OVER THE

NEXT FEW MONTHS, AS LONG AS THE DC CONTINUES TO REFUSE AN "EMERGENCY" GOVERNMENT OF ALL THE "CONSTITUTIONAL" PARTIES, THE PSI PROBABLY WILL NOT TRY TO PULL THE RUG OUT FROM UNDER THE PRESENT ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PSI SEMINAR ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY HELD IN ROME ON SEPTEMBER 21 AND 22 PRODUCED NO IMMEDIATE RESULTS WORTHY OF NOTE IN EITHER THE ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL FIELDS. OF COURSE, THE PARTY SAYS THAT THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE SEMINAR WILL SOON BE TRANSLATED INTO A LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. WE EXPECT TO SEE LITTLE. ACCORDING TO THE MEMBER OF THE PSI DIRECTORATE WHO ORGANIZED THE MEETING, THE SEMINAR'S PRINCIPAL RESULT WAS REINFORCEMENT OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT WITHIN THE PARTY THAT ITALY'S PROBLEMS CAN BE CONFRONTED EFFECTIVELY ONLY BY AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED BY A WIDE MAJORITY INCLUDING THE PCI. POLITICALLY, THE PSI IS RESOLVED NOT TO LET THE PCI ESCAPE FROM SHARING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HARSH MEASURES WHICH ARE NOW NECESSARY. IN THE SOCIALIST LOGIC, THE COMMUNIST SURGE HAS TAKEN PLACE BECAUSE THE PCI HAS NOT BEEN FORCED TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PAST. PERHAPS UNREALISTICALLY, SOME SOCIALISTS BELIEVE THAT THE PCI WILL BE CONTENT WITH SUPPORTING A GOVERNMENT OF EMERGENCY WITHOUT DEMANDING MINISTERIAL POSTS.

3. IN THIS CONTEXT, PARTY SECRETARY CRAXI'S NEGATIVE REPLY TO DC SENATE PRESIDENT AMINTORE FANFANI'S PROPOSAL FOR NEW COOPERATION BETWEEN THE DC AND THE PSI WAS UNAVOIDABLE. THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT CRAXI HIMSELF MAY WISH SUCH A RELATIONSHIP. RECENT CONTACTS HAVE CONFIRMED OUR BELIEF THAT THE SUBSTITUTION OF FRANCESCO DE MARTINO BY CRAXI WAS ENGINEERED BY A DIVERSE GROUP OF YOUNGER (IN THEIR FORTIES) LEADERS WHO USED THE EXCUSE OF THE PARTY'S ELECTION DEFEAT TO GAIN MORE POWER FOR THEMSELVES. THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE "CRAXI COALITION" ARE IDEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE, AMBITIOUS AND RECOGNIZE CRAXI ONLY AS PRIMUS INTER PARES. THE IDEA OF A "LEFTIST ALTERNATIVE" HAS BEEN SHUFFLED
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INTO THE BACKGROUND EXCEPT AS A VERYLONG RANGE GOAL, BUT THERE APPEARS TO BE NO CHANGE OF AN EARLY AGREEMENT ON ANY ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD ALIGN THE PSI WITH THE DC AND AGAINST THE PCI.

4. CRAXI'S ROOM FOR MANEUVER IS INDEED SMALL. HE KNOWS THAT HIS PARTY WOULD BE SUFFOCATED IN ANY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PCI. HE HAS NO MANDATE TO SEEK

AN ACCORD WITH THE DC. ALL HE CAN DO NOW IS TO SEEK TO RE-BUILD HIS PARTY'S STRENGTH BY STRESSING ITS AUTONOMY AND IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MAINSTREAM OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM. WE MAY EXPECT TO SEE MORE OF THE ACTIVITIES REPORTED IN ROME 15526. IF THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT PLAYS ITS CARDS CLEVERLY, CONSULTING FREQUENTLY WITH THE SOCIALISTS AND BUILDING THE PSI'S CONFIDENCE, WE THINK THAT CRAXI WILL BE ABLE TO AVOID A SOCIALIST BREAK WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. THEN, IF THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO DEAL WITH SOME OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE PSI NOW SAYS DEMAND A GOVERNMENT OF EMERGENCY, CRAXI'S SMALL AUTONOMIST FACTION (12 PERCENT OF THE PARTY AT THE LAST CONGRESS) MAY GAIN AN IDEOLOGICAL AS WELL AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE MANDATE TO NEGOTIATE A NEW ARRANGEMENT WITH THE DC. AS ONE OF THE LEFT-LEANING, BUT PRAGMATIC, MEMBERS OF CRAXI'S COALITION TOLD US, "IN POLITICS, NO DECISION, NOT EVEN OUR REFUSAL TO COOPERATE WITH THE DC WITHOUT THE PCI, IS PERMANENT." ANY CHANGES, HOWEVER, WOULD SEEM TO US AT LEAST SEVERAL MONTHS AWAY. VOLPE

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